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To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 1/23/02 10:27am
Subject: Microsoft Settlement - bad for US businesses

Dear DOJ

I work for a company in the UK, but my story concerns US businesses as well, the problems related to Microsoft reach - as the Internet - beyond borders.

- 1) Only Internet Explorer is available from my PC desktop.
- 2) Company IT policy expressively forbids users (i.e. ordinary employees) from adding any software products to our PC, hereunder browsers.
- 3) My company will only install new software if a "similiar" product is not initially available on the PC, and even then only after a series of written "formalia".
- 4) Effectively this means that there is no way I (as a user) can choose to employ products that compete with Microsofts, hereunder Netscape.

The proposed settlement with MS will not act to improve this situation.

- 5) When buying av PC for home use, I could choose between all kinds of PC producers, several kinds of hard drives, several kinds of monitors (standard and LCD) and I could adjust the price by including and excluding different choises. All in the same shop! That's competition! But only one OS vendor was available, and I could not get any lower price by choosing not to buy any of this vendors products. Remarkably, MS software was more tightly "bonded" to my PC than any piece of the PC hardware ...

The proposed settlement with MS will not act to improve this situation.

- 6) Appearently, large corporate customers have more of a choise than any individual user. However, the proposed settlement will allow MS to present even these customers with a contract that dictates payment of fees and punitive damages (disgused as "increased" subscription fares) to MS if customers at some point decide to test alternatives to any individual Microsoft product. The only way out of the racket is to drop all Microsoft products simultaneously. Even the mightiest corporations will not dare to do this. Any software start-up, offering even the best product, the lowest prices and full MS compatibility, will not be able to reach their customers under such conditions, unless MS buys them first. Obviously, the proposed settlement make a mockery out of the Sherman Act.

best wishes for your work on this case
J. F.

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